

Meeting Summary of the SANBAG Board of Directors

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■ I-15 study cites need to improve Devore interchange

Widening the Interstate 15/Interstate 215 interchange in Devore should be a high priority, according to members of the Technical Advisory Committee of the I-15 Comprehensive Corridor Study. Board members accepted the final report for the study, which started in mid-2003.

During the study, five alternatives were recommended for improving traffic congestion and goods movement on I-15 for a 45-mile section between Route 60 in northwest Riverside County and the Mojave River in Victorville. Last April, these alternatives were narrowed down to include either:

- Construction of two dedicated truck lanes in each direction for the full 45-mile stretch of freeway studied, or
- Construction of a combination of reversible lanes between Route 210 and U.S. Highway 395, plus carpool lanes north and south of this section.

A choice between these alternatives is expected to be made next year, after a Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan is completed.

Regardless of the selected alternative, Board members agreed that steps should be taken to begin a Project Study Report or Project Report for the I-15/I-215 interchange. SANBAG will consider this through the Plans & Programs Committee, in conjunction with the Measure I Strategic Plan.



■ Private sector offers transportation aid

Now is the time to strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors to improve transportation, said Larry Sharp, Vice Chairman of the Inland Empire Transportation Coalition.

Sharp and Chairman Bob Wolf spoke on behalf of the coalition, a non-profit private sector group formed to help solve transportation and mobility concerns in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

A dramatically growing population, expanding freight traffic and severe levels of air pollution have created a set of challenges for the region, Sharp said. He proposed private sector investment by allowing creative financing methods, such as tax-exempt bonds and tollways to expedite goods movement, seaport container fees, new allocation of U.S. Customs revenue and clear communication to legislators about the area's highest priority transportation projects. In addition, Sharp recommended amending California's planning and design process so that projects are completed more efficiently.

■ Measure I prevails in legal challenge by Sierra Club

The Fourth District Court of Appeal struck down a legal challenge to Measure I last week, a move that will allow the half-cent transportation sales tax to be collected from 2010 to 2040.

County voters approved Measure I in November 2004 by a margin of 80.03 percent. The San Geronimo Chapter of the Sierra Club filed suit to contest the sales tax on the grounds that adequate environmental review had not been performed before the measure was placed on the ballot.

SANBAG and the County of San Bernardino filed a demurrer to dismiss the suit, but a Rancho Cucamonga Superior Court judge denied the request in December 2004.

Attorneys then filed a writ with the Court of Appeal last February. The three-member panel of judges unanimously ruled against the Sierra Club and ordered the lower court to vacate its previous ruling. This effectively dismisses the case.

Executive Director Tony Grasso was pleased with the result. "We know Measure I revenues will be used to improve the infrastructure in this region to enhance the quality of life and improve mobility for our motorists," he said.

Down the road . . .

- Feb. 8: Administrative Committee, 9 a.m.
- Feb. 8: Distribution Management Association Freight Movement/Public-Private Partnership Dinner Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 15: Plans & Programs Committee, 12 noon
- Feb. 17: Mountain-Desert Committee, 9 a.m.

Governor proposes Strategic Growth Plan

Plan would invest \$200 billion in state infrastructure

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is tackling the state's infrastructure needs with a Strategic Growth Plan that would invest more than \$200 billion over the next 10 years. The plan would leverage nearly \$70 billion in bond revenue, which would need to be authorized by voters over five successive election cycles.

During a press conference in Riverside on January 23, Schwarzenegger spoke about the need for responsible funding for transportation improvements.

"We can make California a better place to live and grow by improving infrastructure," Schwarzenegger said. "We can do this responsibly — without raising taxes," he continued.

The Strategic Growth Plan would provide funding to move people and goods faster through the Inland Empire and reduce traffic congestion statewide, despite ongoing population growth, the governor said.

Strategic Growth Plan — Transportation Goals

With regard to transportation, the Strategic Growth Plan is designed to reduce congestion by 18 percent over the next decade by building 1,200 new highway miles, constructing 550 miles of new carpool lanes in congested areas, improving 9,000 miles of roads and adding 600 miles of mass transit. The plan also aims to increase public transit use by nearly 40 percent and would add 8,500 miles of bike and pedestrian paths.

From 2006 to 2016, the Strategic Growth Plan includes an investment in transportation totaling \$107 billion:

- \$47 billion from existing funding sources, such as Proposition 42 and federal funds
- \$48 billion in new funding, proposed from leveraging existing funds
- \$12 billion in new bond funds to attract increased federal, local and private funding. These bonds would need to be approved by California voters in two \$6 billion authorizations in 2006 and 2008.

Transportation Investments

The 10-year Strategic Growth Plan would authorize expenditure of the following transportation projects:

- \$28.9 billion to rehabilitation and preserve the state highway system
- \$21.2 billion for major projects on state interregional routes and expansion of the state's carpool lane network
- \$18.9 billion to expand trade corridors and other regional priorities
- \$18.9 billion to increase capacity on major highways by adding auxiliary lanes, improving interchanges and use of technology to aid drivers
- \$7.9 billion for safety and operational improvements on state highways
- \$4.5 billion to enhance existing rail transit and to add new urban commuter rail and intercity passenger rail systems



Governor Schwarzenegger, Senator Bob Dutton, Assemblyman Russ Bogh, SANBAG Board President Kelly Chastain and other officials spoke about the need for investment in transportation during a press conference on January 23 in Riverside.

- \$3 billion for transportation technology and intelligent transportation systems
- \$2 billion for port improvements and environmental mitigation

The plan also permanently protects Proposition 42 — which directs the state sales tax on gasoline to transportation — through a constitutional amendment that eliminates the ability to suspend the proposition during tough budget years.

Enabling legislation is being proposed by Senators Bob Dutton and Don Perata, as well as Assemblymembers Jenny Oropeza and Fabian Nunez. These bills may qualify for the June ballot, although the November ballot is more likely.